

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 13608 191834Z
ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 13608

DEPARTMENT NOTIFY EUR/CE ON RECEIPT

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, BQG
SUBJECT: STOBBE VISIT TO WASHINGTON

REFS: (A) BONN 13525
(B) MAENNING/WHITLOCK MEMCON OF JUNE 16, 1977

1. SPD BUNDESTAG DEPUTY PETER MAENNING HAS INFORMED EMBOFF THAT STOBBE PLANS TO DISCUSS THE MATTER OF A NEW YORK AIR BRAKE CONTRACT WITH WAGGON UNION GMBH OF BERLIN WHEN STOBBE IS IN WASHINGTON. MAENNING HAS EXPRESSED A PRIOR INTEREST IN THIS MATTER (REF B), WHICH MAENNING CONSIDERS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW THE US CAN CONTRIBUTE TO BERLIN'S VIABILITY.

2. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION FROM MAENNING AND ADDITIONAL DATA WHICH THE EMBASSY AND USBER HAVE OBTAINED FROM WAGGON UNION, NEW YORK AIR BRAKE ORDERED 235 SETS OF PULLMAN CAR WHEELS FROM WAGGON UNION ABOUT A YEAR AGO FOR USE IN AMTRAK CARS. THIS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A TRIAL ORDER AT A FAVORABLE PRICE (WAGGON UNION SAYS IT SPENT SOME DM 5 MILLION TO TOOL UP WHICH IT HOPES TO RECOVER OUT OF FUTURE ORDERS) AND THE COMPANY ALREADY
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EXPECTS A SECOND CONTRACT FOR 50 MORE SETS. WAGGON UNION IS REPORTEDLY AN OLD AND SPECIALIZED BERLIN COMPANY WHICH HAS BEEN SUFFERING A DECLINE IN EMPLOYMENT IN THE RECENT PAST (IT HAS LAID OFF 200 OF ITS 1,200 EMPLOYEES), BOTH BECAUSE OF BUNDESBahn RETRENCHMENT AND BECAUSE OF A DECLINE IN ORDERS FROM THE THIRD WORLD. MAENNING SAYS THAT THE SKILLED EMPLOYEES, IF

THEY WERE TO LEAVE BERLIN, WOULD NOT BE LIKELY TO RETURN. ACCORDING TO MAENNING, THE WHEEL SETS ARE REPORTEDLY COMPLEX AND, BY MEANS OF A HYDRAULIC SYSTEM, ALLOW THE INDIVIDUAL WHEELS TO ADAPT THEMSELVES TO TRACK IRREGULARITIES.

3. COMMENT: BOTH MAENNING AND STOBBE UNDERSTAND THAT BERLIN INDUSTRIES HAVE TO BE COMPETITIVE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN SUCH ORDERS AND STOBBE WILL PRESUMABLY NOT MAKE A PLEA FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO INTERVENE TO OBTAIN SPECIAL TREATMENT MERELY BECAUSE BERLIN IS INVOLVED. HOWEVER, WE PROMISED MAENNING THAT WE WOULD INFORM THE DEPARTMENT OF HIS INTEREST IN ORDER THAT THE OFFICIALS WITH WHOM HE SPEAKS WILL HAVE SOME BACKGROUND ON THE PROBLEM. MAENNING'S EARLIER DESCRIPTION (REF B) OF THE FULL CONTRACT AS MEANING 1,000 JOBS AND DM 200 MILLION FOR BERLIN MAY BE A BIT HIGH (USBER WAS TOLD SOME 80-100 EMPLOYEES ARE OCCUPIED BY THE PRESENT CONTRACT) BUT MIGHT NOT BE ON A MAN-YEAR BASIS. STOESEL

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